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GROUP OF GIRLS IN VOCATIONAL HOME ECONOMICS CLASSES,
CHAPEL HILL HIGH SCHOOL

emptying refuse into the sink, etc., made more work for one of the housekeepers.

And going on, I could probably find other values gained by such a lesson, all in addition to the preparation of the particular dish. Such a lesson I believe to be decidedly more practical than the first one described, to be educational, to develop the social side of the child, and in short, to be worthy of college entrance credit.

But naturally such a lesson cannot be taught in a forty-five or fifty-minute period. Can you see why the Board of Vocational Education is so rigid in requiring ninety minutes for a lesson in foods?

A president of a large normal school once told me that, in his opinion, the subject studied in college mattered little; it was the way it was studied, the character it developed that counted. Unless our home economics subjects develop as much character as do the other subjects, we have no right to ask college entrance credit equal to that of other subjects. But if



DOMESTIC SCIENCE ROOM, CHAPEL HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Home Economics not only develops powers but produces an interest in the problems of women in home and in community and if through this study the woman learns what sources of information are available and knows how to use these, then is our Home Economics instruction worthy of a high place in our high school curriculum.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE TEACHING OF ALGEBRA

By A. W. HOBBS, Ph.D.
The University of North Carolina

ONE of the chief faults to be found with our teaching of algebra is that the students do not seem to have any clear ideas about what they are doing. We might seek to remedy this situation by constantly keeping before them an outline something like this:

In problems of arithmetic if we let the quantity sought be represented by a letter, then the solution of our problem is found by solving an equation. The solution of equations then is the purpose of algebra. In trying to solve equations we meet with the necessity for other numbers than integers and fractions. Thus negative numbers and radicals are called in and become a part of our number system. A great part of the time spent on algebra is taken up with learning how to handle these new numbers and how to simplify complicated expressions. The students get lost in this great amount of drill work and thus fail to get any idea of the subject as a whole. This kind of teaching is very bad for the position which algebra holds in our schools.

I have been collecting specimens for the past two or three years of the definitions given by freshmen for "root of an equation." Here are three typical examples:

"A root of an equation is a number which when multiplied by itself with the sign changed will give the equation." "A root is a number or term that will divide into another number or term an even number of times." "A root of an equation is that number which if divided into a number will give an equal quotient or zero."

Algebra must be a horrible nightmare to a person who does not know what is meant by "a root of an equation."

Answers to the examples on equations of course defeat the whole purpose of a book, but some teachers refuse to have anything to do with a text-book which leaves the student any room for thought.

An understanding of what we mean by "solution of an equation," and of the different classes of numbers

used in algebra, it seems to me, is a condition without which any progress in the subject is hopeless. We should make the students see that the square root of 2 has just as definite a position on a ruler as the number 2 has itself, and we should drill the students in the use of these radicals until they are no longer a stumbling block. It is very rare now to find a freshman who can handle these numbers with any degree of ease.

ENGLISH TEACHERS' COLUMN

[The purpose of this column is to afford high school teachers and the instructors in the University an opportunity to exchange experiences, information, and opinion regarding the teaching of English. Contributions are encouraged, and questions about any phase of English teaching are invited. The members of the Freshman English staff in the University will be glad to serve high school teachers of English in any way they can through this column of the JOURNAL. What problems of English teaching are giving you most concern? Have you tried any special methods or devices that have proved successful? Questions and contributions for this column should be addressed directly to the editor of the JOURNAL.—N. W. W.]

LEARNING LANGUAGE WITHOUT LEARNING GRAMMAR

SO long as instruction in Latin was general in the high schools, instruction in English grammar was not absolutely essential. The student of Latin incidentally learns the leading principles of all grammar. But, oddly enough, when Latin passed out of favor, English grammar was neglected likewise. As a consequence, the high school student who comes to college is very likely to be blissfully (miserably, before long) ignorant of grammar. He finds himself seriously handicapped in all his language study, including English.

In preparing a report on the need of high school training in English grammar, a committee of the department of English at the University of Wisconsin called for a statement of opinion by representative University teachers of foreign languages. A few of these statements are printed below. They describe the situation today at our own University.

Professor W. F. Giese, Department of Romance Languages: "The knowledge of English grammar on the part of freshmen in the University of Wisconsin is so slight and so indefinite as to be nearly useless as a basis even for elementary work in foreign languages."

Professor C. D. Cool, Department of Romance Languages: "The student of first year French or Spanish who, though in possession of his high school diploma, still remains in blissful ignorance of the fact that a form like 'going' may be a verbal as well as a participle, or who, in connection with the principal parts of verbs does not know that in 'hunt, hunted,

hunted' the two 'hunted's' are not interchangeable—such a student is a grievous handicap to himself and his classmates when he takes up his foreign language. Unfortunately the writer has found far too many of his students far too little acquainted with such little things as parts of speech. If the high school teacher is tempted to neglect the teaching of grammar in English as dry and formal, he should be reminded that it need not be so taught, and that from the standpoint of the modern language teacher at least, the thorough acquisition of the basic principles of English grammar is absolutely essential to the learning of grammar in a foreign language."

Professor Barry Cerf, Department of Romance Languages: "Our students come to us from high school so ignorant of the elements of English grammar that before we can teach them French grammar we must teach them English grammar."

Professor M. S. Slaughter, Department of the Classics: "Until I had studied a foreign language I had little knowledge and literally no appreciation of English grammar."

"My observation is that the great majority of freshmen at the University who have studied no language but their own do not know English and are consequently at a great disadvantage in their University work."

Professor B. Q. Morgan, Department of German: "Few indeed must be the teachers of language who have not at their tongues' end a ready and unfavorable answer to the above question. Not only does the freshman come to us with the haziest notions about participles and infinitives, prepositions and particles, sentences and clauses; in only too many cases he does not even know what these terms mean, and still less has he any conception of the value of knowing anything about them. If the grammar schools are to remedy this situation, they must do two things: stress the importance of grammar *per se*, and vivify the instruction in grammar so as to gain the willing coöperation of the pupil in the study of its fundamentals."

Professor A. R. Hohlfeld, Department of German: "Effective teaching of a modern language in high school or college classes, no matter whether the direct or reform method is followed or not, requires on the part of the student a sound knowledge of the elements of what I should like to call 'general' grammar. Teachers of elementary German classes have complained to me again and again—and my own observation bears them out—that a considerable number of our students come to the University without this grammatical training and are thereby prevented from making satisfactory progress in their language work."—N. F.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE ON MATHEMATICAL REQUIREMENTS

FOLLOWING a previous statement regarding the work of the National Committee on Mathematical Requirements, the following items may be of interest:

A preliminary report on "The reorganization of Introductory Courses in Mathematics in Secondary Schools" will be issued towards the end of November. This report has been prepared by a representative sub-committee. It has not as yet been considered by